

People

## 9 Leading Advisors, Dealers, and Art-World Insiders Tell Us Which Artists They Think Are Poised to Break Out in 2020

Keep your eye on these rising stars.

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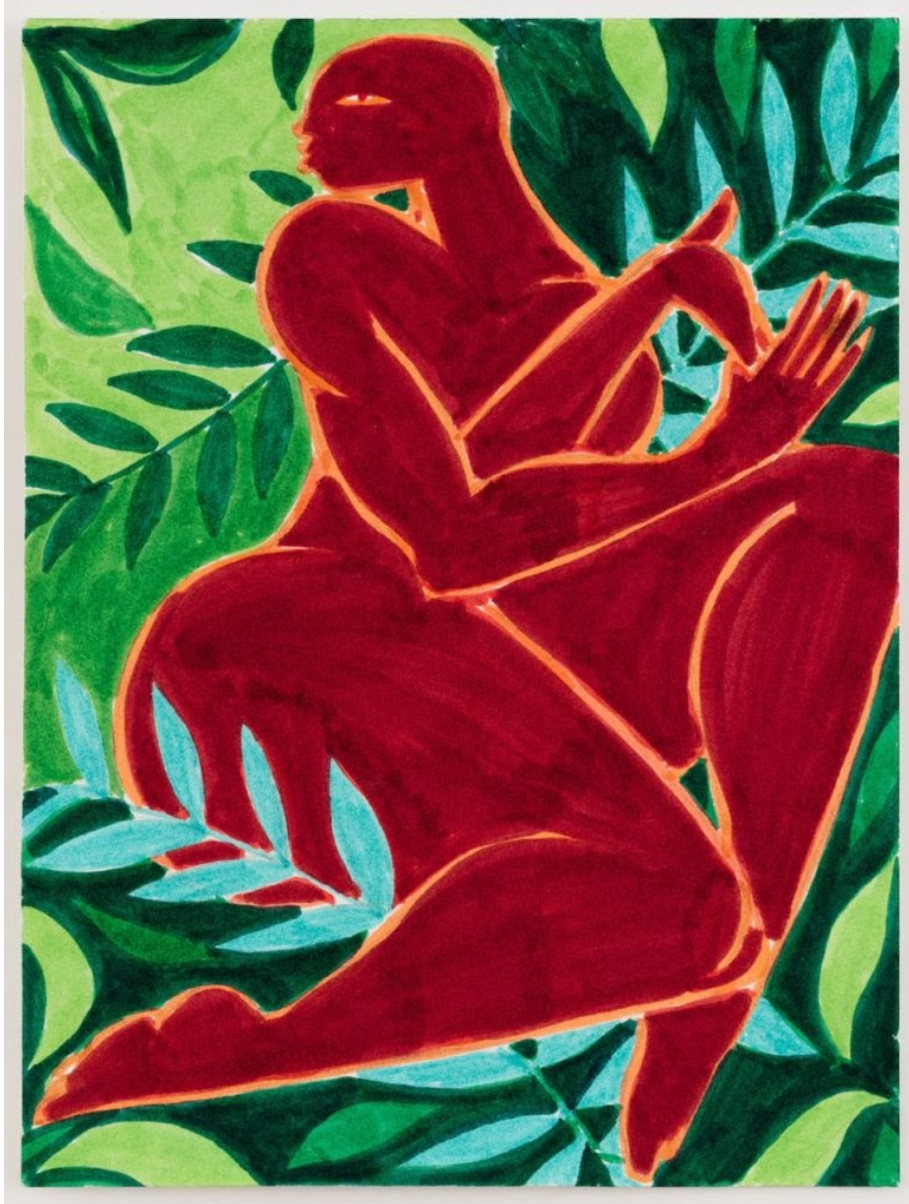
Zachary Armstrong in his studio. Image courtesy of the Faurschou Foundation.

It's the art world's favorite game: guessing which artists are about to become the buzzworthiest new stars.

And what better time to play than on the precipice of a new year (and decade) with a guaranteed schedule of biennials, art fairs, gallery exhibitions, and auctions on the horizon.

Artnet News asked nine taste-makers for their thoughts on which artists will be hot in 2020—and why. Here's what they told us.

## Tunji Adeniyi-Jones



Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, *Untitled* (2018). Courtesy of Nicelle Beauchene Gallery.

I think Tunji Adeniyi-Jones will be the breakout star of 2020. He's a young British-Nigerian artist who makes vibrant figurative paintings inspired by his Yoruba heritage. His second New York solo exhibition just opened

at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, and he is one of 16 artists, from over 700 applicants, to be selected for Kehinde Wiley's Black Rock Senegal residency.

—*Molly Krause, communications strategist*

## Jean Claracq



Jean Claracq, *Landscape with the temptation* (2019). Image courtesy Sultana and private collection, Paris.

Jean Claracq's work is [tied to a] tradition of Flemish painting from the 15th and 16th centuries, but with a very contemporary iconography taken from the internet of Instagram and gay dating sites. There is an attention to very fine details and a meticulousness in the realization of the work that stands out in relation to how young artists are painting today. Technically, he is very strong, and his style is recognizable. But he paints very little and the waiting list is already long. His recent buyers have proven to be women, which has given us great pleasure. His work is not [being received as a] "gay image," but as painting that has a broader scope.

—Guillaume Sultana, founder, Galerie Sultana



## Kathia St. Hilaire



A work by Kathia St. Hilaire. Courtesy of Cargo Collective.

Kathia St. Hilaire's tapestry-like figurative paintings stopped me in my tracks. The Haitian-American artist creates densely layered paintings that poignantly capture everyday scenes from her upbringing. She engages with her printmaking background to create an innovative support for her paintings: she first employs printmaking techniques onto everyday packaging materials, such as sugar boxes, which she then paints. This process results in a rich, sculptural surface that brings her narratives to life. The artist is finishing her MFA at Yale and will have a debut solo show at Derek Eller Gallery in New York in summer 2020.

—Anne Bruder, founder, Anne Bruder Art

## Zachary Armstrong



A view of "Zachary Armstrong: Paintings" at Tilton Gallery. Photo: courtesy Tilton Gallery.

My wife Masha and I were first introduced to Zachary Armstrong's art years ago by Jack Tilton, who had a rare eye for talent. Since then, we have closely followed Zachary and witnessed how his already impressive oeuvre has further matured. He will be the first young artist to have a solo show at Faurschou Beijing in March 2020. The exhibition he has prepared for his debut in Beijing is stunning in every detail, which makes us convinced it will be his breakthrough year.

—Jens Faurschou, founder, Faurschou Foundation

## Vaughn Spann



Vaughn Spann. Courtesy of Half Gallery.

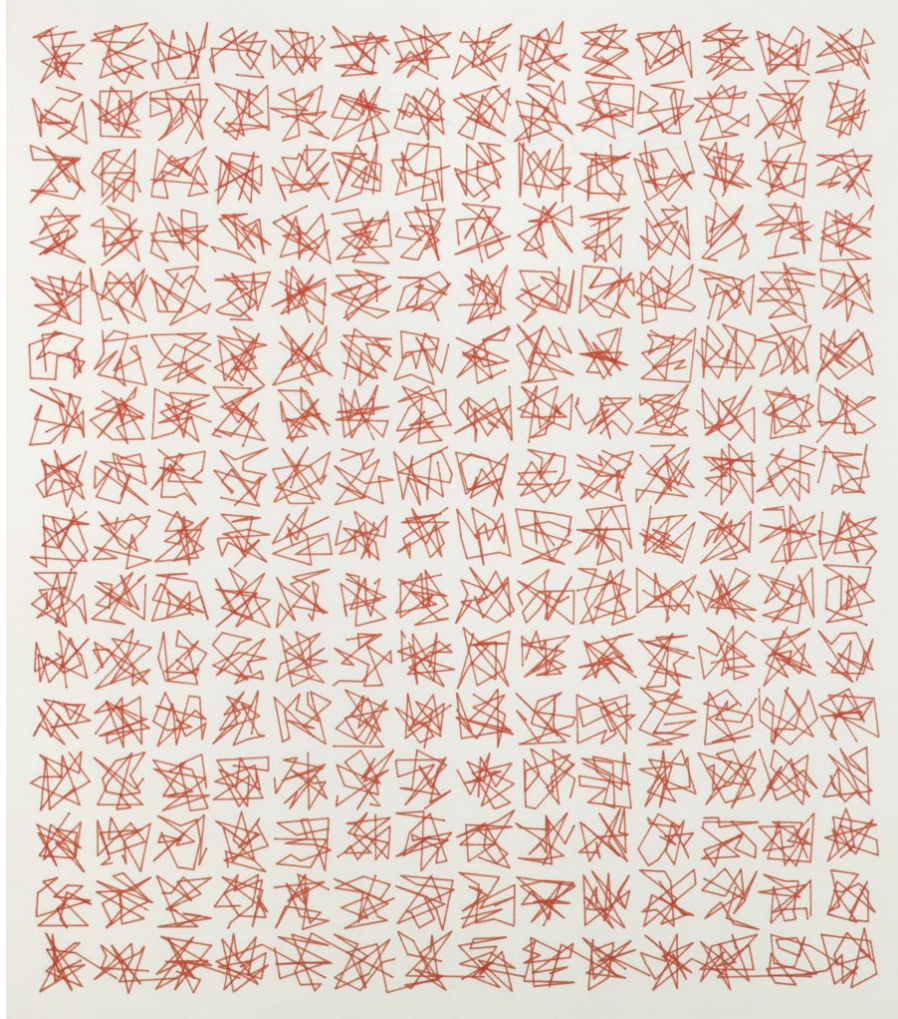
Vaughn Spann's colossal *Rainbow* painting at the Rubell Museum held its own alongside contemporary masters Kehinde Wiley and Glenn Ligon. A deeper dive into Spann's oeuvre shows the 27-year-old Yale graduate already has multiple bodies of work, both figurative and abstract. It is rare to see a young artist



working on such a sophisticated level so early on. Vaughn Spann is the real deal and I anticipate his upcoming gallery show at Almine Rech in New York in January will be his breakout moment.

—*Nilani Trent, founder, Trent Fine Art Advisory*

## Vera Molnár



Vera Molnar, *Hommage a Durer* (1990).

Vera Molnár, now 95 years old, has conquered adversity as a female artist, immigrant, and user of computers in artwork as early as 1968. Her exquisite Constructivist work in both traditional and digital media has been increasingly recognized for its exceptional quality. She will be included in four major institutional shows in 2021, and I am confident that 2020 will start to bring well-deserved mainstream attention to this female pioneer.

—Anne Spalter, digital artist and computer art expert

## Tong Kunniao



*Something in the air* (2019) from an exhibition at Xie Zilong phototherapy museum, in Changsha Shi, China.

Tong Kunniao stems from a new generation of Chinese artists. He was born in 1990 and has grown up with China ascending the world stage amid extreme digital acceleration. His vision of art departs from what we have seen as “Chinese” or “Asian” art and opens up new discourses on what we perceive as socially relevant, what consumerism means in the art world, and where we place physical meaning today. I find that

his reflections on society—both serious and at times ironic—give a lasting impression of what being an artist really means today.

—*Walter Gehlen, director, Art Düsseldorf*



## Theaster Gates

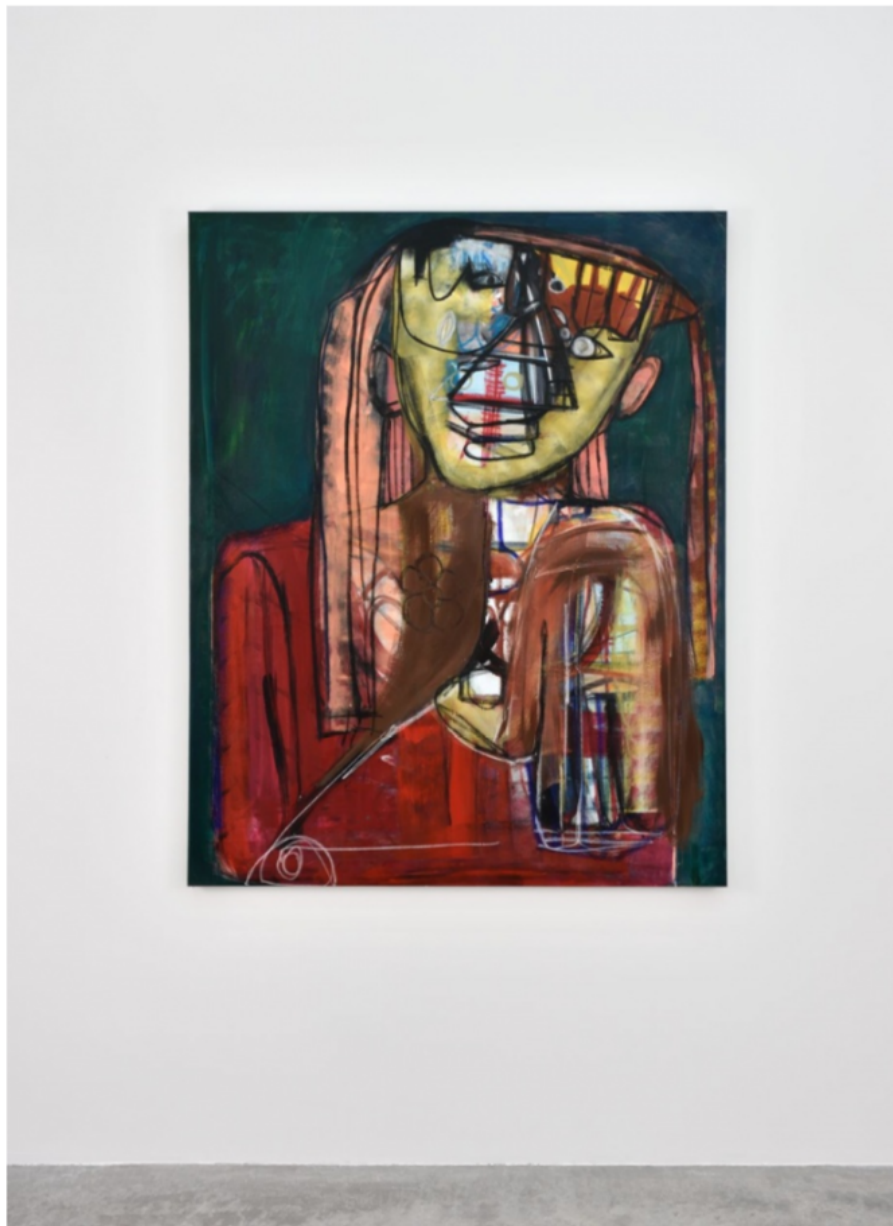


Works by Theaster Gates. Photo by David Sampson, courtesy the artist and Rebuild Foundation.

As a collection-builder, I'm looking closely at artists who address issues and ideas that are drivers for change. Theaster Gates is a game-changing artist whose work and life are dedicated to social justice—an urgent need that Gates has proven art can successfully address. His Rebuild Foundation has galvanized and rejuvenated Chicago's South Side through employment initiatives, job training, and reinvestment in the community. Until now, he has not been represented in New York, but that will change when Gagosian shows a new body of work in spring 2020. With White Cube representing the artist worldwide, Regen Projects in Los Angeles, and Richard Gray in Chicago, Gates has stellar representation, an essential market-making component. In these times of social and political upheaval, Gates's work makes a powerful statement of unity and compassion.

—Wendy Cromwell, founder, Cromwell Art

## Genesis Tramaïne



A work by Genesis Tramaïne. Courtesy Almine Rech.

Genesis Tramaine is poised to break out in 2020. Her style is rooted in Modern art, with strong ties to 1980s urban New York graffiti, and her powerful imagery beckons memories of past lives and glimpses of undiscovered futures. We presented her abstract portraits—which layer historical moments and imagined metaphors, often from the Bible and West African history—in a group show called “Chorus” at our gallery in Paris during FIAC, and they were enthusiastically received. We’re looking forward to presenting her first solo exhibition in Europe in 2020.

—*Almine Rech-Picasso, owner, Almine Rech Gallery*